



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Eighth IRENA Legislators Forum at the Thirteenth Session of the Assembly of the
International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

Abu Dhabi, 13 January 2023

Moderator, Dear Kande,
Dear Francesco La Camera, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA),
Your Excellency, Dr. Ali AlNuaimi, member of Federal National Council, United Arab Emirates, and
member of the IPU Executive Committee,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, it is a pleasure for me to be with you today during the Eighth IRENA Legislators Forum taking place at the IRENA Assembly here in Abu Dhabi. I would like to begin by thanking IRENA for hosting this important event that has gathered so many legislators from around the world.

The topic of this year's Forum is incredibly timely as green hydrogen is increasingly seen as an innovative solution to help secure a net-zero future. 2023 is the mid-point for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as for meeting key targets set out in the Paris Agreement. This means we only have seven years left to reduce global emissions by nearly 50% and secure sustainable development. Now is the time for countries to urgently strengthen national energy strategies to ensure a low-carbon future, including by exploring ways to boost green hydrogen capacity.

This Assembly provides a valuable opportunity to discuss the role of green hydrogen in promoting a clean energy transition and how legislators can support this process.

We are facing a global energy crisis. I believe there is a global consensus that countries must decrease their dependence on fossil fuels if we are to ensure energy security. The world must transition to more sustainable and varied types of energy. Green hydrogen offers the potential to further diversify our sources of energy and create new economic opportunities.

As legislators, parliamentarians have the duty to safeguard and protect the rights of their constituents. Energy security is essential to the realization of these rights. Energy contributes to the fulfilment of many basic human needs, including nutrition, warmth, and electricity. Access to reliable, efficient, affordable, and safe energy can directly affect income and health, as well as enhance gender equity and educational access. Energy security is one of the pillars of sustainable development.

Through their legislative, budgetary, oversight and representation functions, parliaments are in a unique position to accelerate the energy transition. As countries continue to face the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global energy crisis—with fluctuating prices of fossil fuels, fertilizers, and food—resource allocations are being continually revisited in many countries. Parliamentarians can help ensure resources are directed to scale-up investments in green hydrogen and to support legislation that facilitates a global energy transition.

The wide participation in this Assembly demonstrates that strong political will towards a clean energy transition exists. At the IPU, we strongly encourage the opportunities for knowledge and experience-sharing provided at such fora. As we are all fully aware, climate change knows no boundaries so international collaboration and dialogue is of paramount importance.

Parliamentarians should now build on this political will to ensure a sound legislative response to the energy challenge. Legislation serves as an important vehicle in the energy transition. It can incentivize investments in renewables, green hydrogen and clean technologies. Parliamentarians can and must ensure their governments have created a suitable environment for the creation of a hydrogen market that is sustainable and promotes energy security, while also bringing economic and social benefits, particularly for the most marginalized members of society.

The IPU is committed to supporting its 178 Member Parliaments in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and tackle climate change, including through the promotion of clean energy. The IPU regularly supports bilateral, regional, and international parliamentary engagement to facilitate the sharing of good practices and lessons learned to address climate and development challenges.

Climate is one of the cornerstones of the new IPU strategy for 2022-2026. It recognizes the need for decarbonization and stronger implementation of the Paris Agreement in order to address the climate crisis. The IPU stands ready to help parliaments contribute to the achievement of these objectives, including through national and regional capacity-building activities on critical topics such as energy.

When considering actions to support the clean energy transition, time is essential. The IRENA Assembly, including this Legislators Forum, provides a much-needed platform for rich discussions and knowledge-sharing amongst parliamentarians, government officials, and civil society representatives on plans, policies, laws and budgets to jumpstart the energy transition across countries before it is too late. It is only by working together that we can advance the renewable energy agenda for a more sustainable future by the end of this decade.

I look forward to the fruitful discussions and debates that will occur during this Forum and the wider Assembly. I wish you a very successful event.

Thank you very much.